

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 CAIRO 08658 241110Z

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W

-----241255Z 019721 /43

R 240914Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5345

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

S E C R E T CAIRO 8658

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, SO, US

SUBJECT: HORN OF AFRICA -- SOMALIA

REF: (A) CAIRO 8581, (B) STATE 115402

1. DURING PAST TWO DAYS IN ALEXANDRIA, I HAD OPPORTUNITIES SEPARATELY BRIEF BOTH FAHMY AND SADAT ON SOMALIA. I TOLD THEM OF OUR DECISION TO SEND HIGH-LEVEL ECONOMIC SURVEY TEAM TO SOMALIA EVEN BEFORE PRESIDENT SIAD BARRE RECEIVES AMBASSADOR LOUGHREN. THIS SHOULD BE VIEWED AS AN EARNEST OF OUR DESIRE TO BE OF HELP TO SOMALIA AND TO IMPROVE RELATIONS. ONCE AMBASSADOR LOUGHREN SEES SAID BARRE, HE IS ALSO AUTHORIZED TO OFFER TO SEND A DATT IF GDSR WISHES. WITH RESPECT TO SOMALI REQUEST FOR MILITARY HARDWARE, I INDICATED WE WOULD WORK WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF PRESIDENT CARTER'S NEWLY ISSUED ARMS SALES POLICY. AS VISITING DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY SEELYE HAD NOTED, WE ARE CONSIDERING POSSIBILITY OF SOME SORT OF ARMS SUPPLY CONSORTIUM WITH WHICH WE MIGHT BE ABLE PARTICIPATE IN SOME WAY. THIS WAS A MATTER WHICH STILL HAD TO BE STUDIED.

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2. BOTH FAHMY AND SADAT THOUGHT THESE WERE GOOD STEPS. SADAT, RECALLING THE ACCOUNT OF SIAD BARRE'S SPECIAL ENVOY, NOTED THAT SOMALIA IS NOT LIKELY TO BE ABLE TO BUY WEAPONS. IT DOES NOT HAVE THE MONEY TO DO SO. FAHMY OBSERVED THAT THE SAUDIS ARE GIVING SIAD BARRE SOME \$15 MILLION, WHICH HE CAN USE FOR ARMS PURCHASES.

3. SADAT MADE CANDID COMMENT THAT HE HAD "LOST FAITH IN SIAD BARRE." WHEN HE FIRST MET THE SOMALI PRESIDENT, HE HAD BEEN DEEPLY IMPRESSED. HE HAD VIEWED BARRE AS A "BRAIN" WITH A FAR GREATER DEPTH OF UNDERSTANDING THAN HE HAD FOUND WITH MOST OTHER AFRICAN LEADERS. HE HAD BEEN DISTURBED, HOWEVER, THAT BARRE HAD TWICE LIED TO HIM ABOUT THE MATTER OF SOVIET BASES. BARRE HAD DENIED THERE WERE SUCH BASES. SADAT HAD BEEN SHOWN BY US AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS CLEARLY INDICATING THERE WERE BASES. SADAT ALSO RECALLED HIS RECENT EXCHANGE WITH SENATOR BARTLETT IN WASHINGTON, DURING WHICH HE HAD BEEN TOLD ABOUT THE SENATOR'S TRIP TO SOMALIA LAST YEAR TO LOOK INTO THE BASES QUESTION. THE SENATOR HAD TOLD HIM THERE WERE SUCH BASES.

4. SADAT ALSO COMMENTED THAT "SOMETHING DRAMATIC IS HAPPENING IN SOMALIA." HE HAD GAINED THE IMPRESSION FROM SIAD BARRE'S SPECIAL EMISSARY THAT THE SOMALI PRESIDENT SEEMS TO HAVE VERY LITTLE FREEDOM. SOVIETS AND PRO-SOVIET SOMALIS SEEM TO BE IN CONTROL IN BOTH THE CIVILIAN BUREAUCRACY AND EVEN IN THE ARMY. THEY SERIOUSLY RESTRICT SIAD BARRE'S ABILITY TO MANEUVER.

5. NEVERTHELESS, SADAT CONTINUED, SIAD BARRE SEEMS TO BE TRYING TO GET OUT OF SOVIET CLUTCHES. WHATEVER HIS UNCERTAINTY ABOUT SIAD BARRE, THE LATTER'S AVOWED DESIRE TO SHIFT HIS ALIGNMENT DESERVES TO BE TESTED. EGYPT IS HELPING AS MUCH AS IT CAN. HE HAD RECENTLY DISCUSSED THE MATTER WITH KING KHALID AND CROWN PRINCE FAHD, WHO  
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ARE ALSO HELPING. HE WAS PLEASED THAT USG IS TAKING SOME POSITIVE STEPS. IN SADAT'S VIEW, WE SHOULD ALL MOVE CAUTIOUSLY BUT ALSO RESOLUTELY IN TRYING TO ASSIST SIAD BARRE AND ENCOURAGE THE LATTER TO SHIFT HIS ALIGNMENT. GIVEN THE IMPORTANT STRATEGIC POSITION OF SOMALIA, AND GROWING SOVIET INFLUENCE IN ETHIOPIA, WE HAVE EVERYTHING TO GAIN AND NOTHING TO LOSE BY TRYING TO WEAN THE GDSR AWAY FROM ITS PREVIOUS TOTAL DEPENDENCE ON THE SOVIETS.  
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